

Remarks

The Examiner is thanked for the Official Action dated December 26, 2001. This amendment and request for reconsideration is intended to be fully responsive thereto.

The drawings were objected to for failing to illustrate the subject matter of claim 9 where the transition flange wraps above the top side of the roof rail member. Applicant ha added a new Figure 4 to illustrate the subject matter of claim 9. Applicant has submitted a Replacement Sheet adding new Figure 4. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1, 3-8, 10 and 11-15 were rejected under 35 USC 102 (b) as being anticipated by Okana et al. (US Patent 6,322,135). This rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

It is noted that the examiner indicated that claims 2 and 9 were allowable over the prior art. Applicant has amended claims 2 and 9 into independent claims. Thus, claims 2 and 9 are in condition for allowance.

Regarding claims 1, 3-8 and 10-15, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to clarify that the transition flange may be a separate flange member that is separate and apart from the pillar or roof rail. Kana et al. '135 teaches a roof rail panel member 8 formed with transitional areas shown in Figure 13. The roof rail panel member 8 includes inner reinforcement members 60, 62. However, the roof rail panel member 8 with the curved transition areas is very difficult to manufacture.

In re RAGER
10/630,933

It is the express purpose of this invention to propose a transition flange that eliminates the need to form the transition areas directly in the roof rail or pillar members, because it is so difficult to integrally form these transition areas in the roof rail and pillar members.

The present invention provides a cross member 298 with an integrated door seal feature or transition flange 288 (see Figure 3). The transition flange is either integrally formed with the cross member 298 or otherwise affixed thereto to simplify the manufacturing process.

It is respectfully submitted that the application and claims are now believed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe additional discussion would advance the prosecution of the present application, they are invited to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Matthew Stavish
Reg. N° 36,286

Liniak, Berenato & White
Suite 240
6550 Rock Spring Drive
Bethesda MD, 20817
Tel. (301) 896-0600
Fax. (703) 896-0607